

Y *Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans*

777 and catch it there, thus literally "saving your face," as did the women
754 of Konjitz in Bosnia.

A Illness being very largely ascribed to Evil Eye or magic, amulets in
753 Albania are usually called "derman" or "ilatch," both of which words
754 also mean remedy.

777 *Sympathetic Magic.*—In this the disease is supposed to act in accord
A with some object or other and disappears as it does.

755 A cure for jaundice was thus performed by a Moslem wise man on
the child of a Scutari Christian. He tied some red wool round the child
and some yellow wool round a red rose in the garden. He ordered the
red to go out of the rose into the child, and the yellow to go out of
the child into the rose. In a few days the rose wilted and yellowed and the
child recovered its rosy cheeks. The efficacy of the cure was undoubted.

Marko had another he thought better, because it could be carried
out at any time of year. You put a small fish in a bucket of water.
The patient had to stare at it as it swam round and round. If he stared
at it long and steadily enough, the disease went out of the patient into
the fish, which died.

A In 1912-13, owing to the Albanian Revolution and the Balkan wars,
[722] large numbers of the mountain tribesmen who pasture their beasts
164 on the Bojana plains in winter were unable to return to the mountains,
and were blocked in the malaria swamps all the summer, with terrible
consequences. Almost all were struck down with a virulent form of
the disease. I went through the worst districts with a load of quinine,
and found the people trying to cure their greatly enlarged spleens
by slowly roasting the spleen of a sheep at a fire, and muttering spells
which ordered their own spleens to diminish as that of the sheep
shrivelled at the fire.

A Epilepsy was not uncommon in the mountains. It was looked upon
164 as a possession by evil spirits. I once saw a woman fall down suddenly
776 in a fit. Some men at once rushed up and, telling me to get out of the
753 way, fired their revolvers alongside of her head. This was to scare
A away the evil spirit. As she soon recovered, they believed they had done
[755] so. I once saved a woman under similar circumstances from being
flogged. Luckily she recovered quickly. But it is not so very long ago
that lunatics were flogged in England.

A Marko knew of a certain cure for epilepsy, but difficult to obtain.
777 If you see a snake swallowing a frog, you must throw a black hand-
755 kerchief over it. This scares the snake and it disgorges the frog. Keep
the handkerchief, and when someone falls in a fit, throw it over him.
He will then disgorge the disease as the snake did the frog. We kept
a careful look-out, on our travels, for a snake eating a frog, but we
never found one.

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757 enough creature near Scutari, was esteemed as very good for con-
278 sumptive patients.

A The flesh of the common land tortoise was thought of great value
[262] for all convalescents. When I came out of hospital Marko had prepared
a savoury stew for my supper. I ate heartily. "Thank God!" cried the
good old man, "you have eaten 'breshké,' and you will soon be strong
and well." He fetched the shell of the large tortoise which had provided
[136] my meal.

A So common are these tortoises that an Albanian proverb says:
164 "There is no mountain without a wolf and no plain without a tortoise."

136 *Diseases.*—Intestinal troubles of all kinds are rife in the Balkans,
owing to bad food, and in some districts to a morbid appetite for very
acid food. Intestinal worms—tape, thread, and round—are very common.

A A preparation of buckthorn is given.

165 Infant mortality is excessively high all through the Balkans. If
853 a mother can nurse her child till the flocks are giving milk plentifully
it stands a chance; if not, it is fed on parboiled maize-flour and heavy
maize-bread. The abdomen swells greatly, and the child often dies;
A and, as I have stated, desire to preserve the child from the Evil Eye
854 causes many to be half-suffocated in the cradle. Only the toughest
754 survive, and they are very tough. The Albanians, Montenegrians, and
M Macedonians, whom I have had charge of as sick or wounded, do not
CM suffer from shock, nor are they as sensitive to pain as West Europeans.
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A *Wounds.*—The Albanian tribesmen were far cleverer with wounds
than with sickness. They had a traditional antiseptic treatment which
757 was very successful. Old Marash Hutzi of Hoti, who had learnt the
752 art from his grandfather, explained it to me. A wound must never
be touched with water; it must be thoroughly washed out with rakia
(brandy distilled from grapes). He judged the state of a wound by
smelling it carefully. When well washed—when it perforated a limb he
poured rakia right through—he dressed it with an ointment he made
from white wax, olive oil, pine resin, and a decoction of the bark of
green elder twigs. If deep, he plugged it with wool soaked in this
ointment. In hot weather the dressings should be changed twice a day;
and so long as the wound was foul he washed it daily with rakia.
He saved a leg—compound comminuted fracture caused by horse-
kick—which the Turkish military surgeon was going to amputate
and made a quite usable, though rather shortened, limb of it. The
grateful patient gave him thirty francs, the biggest fee the good old
A man had ever received. He had made his own instruments—some
757 probes, forceps, a small saw made from a barrel hoop, and some knives.
826 From his grandfather's and his own experience he had a fair knowledge
752 of where the main arteries ran, "where it was safe to cut and where

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744 In Bosnia a remedy for coughs was to burn oak-galls and inhale the
278 smoke.

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752 In all districts that I visited in the Balkans I found mud used to
844 dress wounds by the common people; but never heard of a case of
tetanus, though I have had hundreds of wounded through my hands.
The land is very poorly, or not at all manured, which may explain this
fact. The Austrian doctor in Scutari told me that in seven years he
had had but two cases—both came up the river on ships, so were not
local infections; also, though "Albanian women are not so well cared
for at childbirth as an Austrian cow," he had never seen a case of
puerperal fever, and believed neither the tetanus nor the puerperal-
fever germs had reached these districts.

But with these two exceptions the Balkans are decimated with
disease. It is a mistake to imagine that a rough, simple life produces
health.

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A The apparent sturdiness of the survivors blinds the outsider to
751 the intensity of the struggle for existence and its mass of victims.

164 Compulsory vaccination has immensely reduced small-pox in many
districts. It is interesting to see how an epidemic will sweep up to
the vaccination line—and there stop short. But exposure, hunger, and
toil wear out many a peasant in early middle age; and disease takes
a heavy toll as well. The two worst Balkan scourges are tuberculosis
and syphilis. In Montenegro and in Albania there are districts where
every individual is reputed to be infected with the latter. So, too, in
Bosnia, and there alone it was being scientifically combated by the
Austrian medical staff.

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164 Of tuberculosis the Bosnian doctor—a Vienna-trained man—with
whom I worked in Montenegro said: "We South Slavs are the most
tuberculous people in Europe. Thirty per cent. of us are badly infected.
I do not count an 'apex,' for I have one myself."

H Leprosy is sometimes seen, but not often, and much skin disease
164 is carried probably by dirt and vermin.

165 Finally, those individuals who succumb to neither disease nor
hardship are unbelievably tough, and live on to a green old age, often
active to the last. That there are as many centenarians as is popularly
believed I doubt. No registers of birth have been kept and dates are
fixed haphazard. A gay old boy at Rioli was said to be 102. Five years
afterwards I met him again and he was 120. To prove this his family
earnestly declared he must be very old, because his father lived at the
time when the ancient Romans—those people who made the bits of
money you dig up out of the ground—were living at Podgoritz. Others
were grandfathers at the time of the Russo-Turkish War; of one
it was said no one could remember him without white hair, and so

Magic, Medicine, Soothsaying

forth. Seventy to eighty years was nearer their age than a hundred; and many who looked sixty were younger. H
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Women are early worn out. Especially in Montenegro, there is a very great difference in height between men and women. Women I found usually shorter than I am (5 ft. 3 ins.); whereas men well over six foot are not uncommon. The Montenegrins seemed proud of this difference, and when I said that of course, if a girl was married at fifteen and had four children before she was twenty she never grew to her full height, they were very angry indeed. M
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Lunacy and Mental Diseases.—Lunacy is very generally believed to be possession by evil spirits, if the lunatic is a violent and dangerous one. Exorcisms are much used both by the Catholic and Orthodox priests. In Orthodox monasteries lunatics are often treated with great cruelty, and beaten and otherwise maltreated in order to drive out the spirits. I once saw an unfortunate man, almost naked, chained like a dog to a sort of kennel in the yard of a monastery. He was very quiet and half-dazed. The monks admitted that they beat him whenever he resisted or tried to escape. H
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The women of the Balkans, completely exhausted as they only too often are by severe toil and perpetual child-bearing and lactation, often suffer from neurasthenia and "hysteria." A curious form is not uncommon among the women of Macedonia and Montenegro. I am told it occurs also in Russia. It begins as a hiccup, and becomes more and more intense until it is a violent and fast-recurring spasm of the diaphragm. The hiccoughs become louder and louder till they are an uninterrupted crowing like that of a hoarse rooster. So quick are they that the patient cannot breathe. Just as she appears to be in danger of choking, she suddenly pulls herself together, draws a long breath, gives a gasp or two, and recovers in a few minutes. At intervals the attacks may go on all day; nor, when the habit is acquired, is it easy to cure. To a certain extent it is under the patient's control; but not entirely. When I did relief work among the Bulgar peasants in Macedonia after the revolt in 1903, I met a case which had been reported as "a Turkish atrocity" by relief workers unacquainted with the complaint. I visited the village where she was. She was quite quiet. So soon as she heard I was an English relief agent she began to "crow" loudly and had one spasm after another. By way of a test I said: "Tell her if she makes that noise I will do nothing for her." And after some gasping she recovered and made no more noise while I was there. But she was not cured. H
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The Balkan remedy is one of suggestion. On a saint's day the patient is taken to the Orthodox church. On St. Petar's Day, at Moratchka H
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bathing the affected member three times in warm water, rubbing it with salt, and finally passing over it the blade of a knife with the words, "As this salt melts, so may the evil melt!" The house is then swept with a new broom, the sweeper saying as the dust is swept out, "So may all evil be swept away!"

* If ringworm (*oóthi*) appears with the new, it may be made to disappear with the waning moon, by covering the place with wood ashes, and repeating at the same time the charm:

Came the spot and made him foul,
Came the ash and made him whole.¹

The remedy for the bite of a tarantula is to place the sufferer on a heap of dung, while nine women bearing the name of Maro² sit round him in a circle and chant the following incantation:—

Nine Maros here are we,
And but one art thou.
Thou hast worked, thy work succeeds;
We have worked without success.
Evil hast thou wrought,
Good do thou now work,
O mistress spider!³

When an Albanian wife has no children, or is the mother of girls only, she, like her Greek sister, attributes her misfortune to some enemy of her family having tied together a number of nettles with this object, and has recourse to counter-spells in order to

¹ *Epi ophi e vepetë*.

Epi xhi e vepetë (lit. "drink it up").

² Perhaps, like the similar Greek name, a form of Maria or Mary.

³ Tarantulas are called by the Albanians by the generic name for spider *pepërya*. Comp. Von Hahn's *Albanische Studien*, p. 157.

000 set in green and shady gardens. There lay the prize for the victors in this many-sided struggle.

Ihsan's house was situated in the plain to the north-west of Tirana and some five hours' march from the mountain village of Priske, where we stopped for our evening meal. The presence of German patrols made it dangerous to go down into the plain before dark and required us to reach our destination before dawn. Ihsan had sent an escort of his bodyguards to meet us, but we sat too long over our meal and scarcely left ourselves time for the journey. The darkness of the night concealed us from the enemy, but it equally obscured from us the many pitfalls by which our path was beset. The tracks leading down from the mountain were slippery, for it had been raining; and I fell over several times. Once in the plain the way led along a dry watercourse, filled with ankle-spraining stones and short, thorny scrub. Down at sea-level the night was hot and dank; and clouds of mosquitoes tormented our brief halts. But brief they were; for the guides kept an anxious watch on the eastern mountains, where the sky would first grow pale, and loped ahead, coaxing us on with false assurances that we should soon be there. At last the rumble of lorries warned us that we were approaching a road. This was the dust track along which traffic between Tirana and the North had been diverted since the destruction of the Gyoles bridge. We crossed the track between two convoys — a pleasing tribute to Smiley's work — and, passing through a stretch of woodland, emerged into a broad meadow just as day was breaking.

[164] In the meadow stood Ihsan's house, one-storied and white-washed, like many of the smaller country houses in Hungary. A light was burning in one of the windows; and, as we crossed the lawn, Ihsan Bey came out to welcome us. He led the way indoors through mosquito curtains, for the plains are malarial; and we found ourselves for the first time in two months in a civilised room. There were armchairs and sofas; books and magazines lay on the table; pictures hung on the walls; and in a corner stood a luxurious radiogram. We stacked our submachine-guns and accoutrement of war beside it and sat

Defeat in Victory

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with him at the beginning of the civil war. Such recriminations might appear academic, but they disguised a natural and urgent conflict of interests. The two parties could no longer help each other in Albania; they might soon rend each other in exile; and, now that resistance ~~had ceased~~, Zogists and Ballists appeared as rivals for British ~~favour~~, rather than as allies against the Partisans. The Agha had resolved to dissociate himself from men who had "collaborated" with the Germans, but the Ballists still hoped to shelter behind his name. We never asked what passed between them that day; but, when their meeting was over, the Ballist leaders bade us farewell and returned towards the mountains looking like condemned men.

Midhat and Ali were followed by Fikri Dine, who came to discuss the advantages of resistance or flight, and to enquire what reception he might expect from the British if he should land in Italy. Despite his defection to our side we could offer little encouragement to a former "Quisling"; and the Agha advised him to win back in the mountains the reputation he had lost in Tirana. He left us to return to Dibra, but our camp remained a rallying-point for Nationalists of every kind who clung instinctively to Abas Kupa. Among them came a delegation from the Catholic mountaineers of the Malsia i Madhe, inviting him to organise their resistance against the Partisans. Abas Kupa received them in our presence and declined their proposal, saying:

"It would be against the wishes of the British, and, though they may forsake me, yet I will never turn against them."

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THE weather had been fine when we came down into the plain; but October is the malarial season; and our nights were plagued by innumerable mosquitoes. Our supplies of quinine were long since exhausted, but we were luckily spared the fever which ravaged the ranks of our Turkomans and Albanians. At first we spent the days out of doors, resting on the bright coloured rugs which our host would spread for us in the sun-

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141 from all the others in the measurements of the
 *128 head and face. These people are, compared to the others, notably narrow headed, narrow faced, and long faced.

Head form (figs. 14, 15) follows the same distribution shown by the tribes. The one measurement that does not vary at all significantly is head height. Head length, however, shows the greatest variation of any character recorded. Computing a cephalic module from the means,⁷ we find the areas clustered into 2 groups, limestone and folded, with 158.90 and 158.41 centimeters respectively, and flysch, serpentine, and eastern with 155.65, 156.71, and 156.91; big heads and medium to small heads. The size of the head, within a major racial group of man, goes with the volume of the body.⁸ In a series like ours where the dimensions of the head are subject to great variation of questionable origin, head size is a more useful criterion for the purpose of this chapter than its components. It clearly separates the Mountain Ghegs into 2 categories, one large, the other medium to small.

This, rather than the individual measurements and indices, is the most suggestive difference yet found between regional segments of the total series. The people in the limestone karst country are big people, and their kinsmen in the country where the soil is laid on a medley of folded outcrops are nearly as big. The people living in the land of serpentine and gabbro are much smaller, as is the small sample of flysch-dwellers. To the east, in the valley of the Black Drin and up into the Prizren region, the people are of intermediate stature, but with relatively long, narrow heads and faces.

142 In addition to the data presented, sortings
 *128 were made for a number of observations which might have to do with general robusticity. This effort yielded nothing that the tribal sortings have not already revealed. No difference was found between areas in the proportion of concave scapulae, which seem to have more to do with age than with nutrition. [164] Finally, the teeth of all areas were seen to be equally carious, equal in frequency of evulsion.

PRIVILEGE AND NUTRITION

565 In many countries food and other benefits
 141 are unequally distributed, and in some of them
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$$^7 \text{Cephalic module} = \frac{L+B+Ht.}{3}$$

1/2 [see cat. 116, pp. 114-115
 -- Analyst]

2/2 [see cat. 116, p. 89b
 -- Analyst]

Kossovari Refugees

places of the mosquitoes. The mayor of Valona, whom I met several times, is a progressive man, and has given much assistance by providing labour for cleaning out and filling ditches and so forth. He was also, I believe, successful in persuading the Government to pay some portion, at all events, of the nurses' salaries. Apart from this, however, the financial responsibility is borne by contributors to "The Albanian Fund," which, in addition to providing help for the sufferers from malaria, attempts also to aid the Albanian refugees who are constantly arriving in a state of destitution from that portion of Serbia which at one time belonged, and, in the opinion of many, should still belong, to Albania. These unfortunate people are called Kossovari. The following extract from a copy of a report that was given to me by Lady Carnarvon is typical :—

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"On arriving at Durazzo I visited a group of Kossovari who were scattered in villages one or two hours away. Their condition was most pitiable. Many had died of malaria, numbers of the survivors were sick—I found in one house six, in another nine out of a family of eleven, prostrate on the ground. Some were able to work, but there was no work to be had, for the summer work was over. If it had not been for the maize given by the American Red Cross, they would have died—and the maize was coming to an end."

The story of the Kossovari refugees as set out in the report throws a painful light on the pitiable position of

To the Land of the Eagle

000 this Albanian "minority"—unfortunately not the only "minority" in the Balkans. The League of Nations does, I understand, attempt to protect these unhappy victims of the arbitrary re-arrangement of boundaries, but whether with success or otherwise I cannot say.

- 164 A curious thing was told me at Tirana with relation to the prevalence of malaria there at the present time. According to the inhabitants, the disease was entirely unknown before the Italian occupation during the war, and they consequently declare that it was introduced by Italians who were malarial subjects.

000 I had intended to leave Valona for Corfu by a boat of the Puglia Line which was due to arrive on a certain Tuesday and to sail at 4 p.m. After packing my suitcases I discovered that she was twenty-four hours late and would not be in until the following day. The young Italian with whom I had shared a *carozza* upon arrival, and who was sailing by the same boat, merely gave his shoulders an amused shrug and resumed his game of cards with the landlord and his son. Other intending passengers, to whom, perhaps, such an incident seemed nothing unusual, accepted the enforced delay with calm, and I had to do the same. It, however, gave me the opportunity of a more thorough exploration of the town, and also enabled me to lunch with three of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's men, two of whom had just arrived in Valona. The third, whom I already knew, had been in the country for some time and was now living in camp out at the port. From them I learned that

To the Land of the Eagle

36/ The village¹, which is the birthplace of the wife of the national hero, Skanderbeg,—its only claim to notice, picturesqueness apart—possesses no inn or wine-shop, and I looked for refreshment in vain. It was a hot day and the walk up the hill had made me thirsty. Some men who met me in what I suppose was the market place, or centre of the village, gave me Turkish delight, good of its kind but hardly what I wanted after my climb in the hot sun, and with that I had to be satisfied. The village gave every sign of being an extremely poor one and many of the houses were in ruins.

[291] There was a school in which sat a row of small boys all wearing their white fezzes, for the Moslem headcovering is worn both indoors and out. The castle I did not inspect. It looked more interesting from a distance, a remark which applies to Kanina as a whole.

164 The bane of Valona, as at Durazzo and elsewhere on the coast, is the mosquito, and the inhabitants of the district are great sufferers from the malaria it carries, as well as from other diseases connected with or due to malaria. Certain philanthropic English people—of whom one of the most active is the Dowager Countess of Carnarvon, who has a small house at Valona—are doing what they can, with the limited funds and limited opportunities available, to help the local Albanians to fight the trouble. They have imported two nurses and three V.A.D. girls. The nurses work at the local hospital. The V.A.D. girls—voluntary helpers—superintend the measures which are being taken to treat, with petroleum and otherwise, the breeding and hibernating

¹[Valona - - Analyst]

EF6 Serbs EF6

Croats

Montenegrins EF5

Albania EG 1

THERAPY

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no cure is possible. 'Black boil' (*crni prišt*, etc.) generally seems to refer to anthrax, but the principle of cure for all similar abscesses and boils throughout the territory consists in the application of heat or of poultices to hasten suppuration, followed by cauterisation sometimes, and rarely by opening with an instrument. At Duvno in Bosnia the boil is cauterised with gunpowder in the same way, and the wound is then sprinkled with alum and a sparrow bound over it; as a precaution honey and garlic are eaten before this operation. These remedies are practised by shepherds, who suffer considerably from the complaint, and believe that unless the boil is immediately cauterised no one can survive. Honey is said to prevent the disease turning to the 'heart'. Fresh blood of a cat; the gall bladder of a bear; the head of a hare, and a hare's fat; a black cock or frog cut open alive; goose dung; pine tar on blue paper, are used.

The plant remedies appear somewhat limited. Slav and Albanian doctors in the south-eastern area recommend the leaves or decoction of the leaves of *Sambucus ebulus* (*zova*) for both internal and external use. Root of *Lappa communis* cooked in milk. Ivy leaves applied with vinegar. For boils and furuncles, in general, a decoction of the seeds or the inner bark of *urgova* (*Boletus agaricus?*). The whole plant including the root of *Podagraria* (?) is pounded and applied to the boil for 24 hours, after which *Betonica officinalis* is used. The local name for *Aegopodium* is *Poganica trava*, corresponding to the English 'gout weed'. Elsewhere it is a remedy for rheumatism, etc., commonly known as *poganica*, which here means a black boil. If this case is accurately quoted—and there is no reason to suppose otherwise—it seems that it is a remarkable example of the working of popular etiology.

Gunpowder is the favourite agent. Another method on the lines of that given above is to cut a hole in a slice of dry bread and to lay it over the abscess, so that the surrounding flesh is protected. The gunpowder is poured into the circle and ignited. A piece of cloth, or better a twist of unspun wool is used, but when the boil is not on the face it is sur-

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164A
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